

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9220

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2237

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EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (FRASER, DONALD M.)

SUBJECT: CODEL FRASER VISIT: CODEL' AND EMBASSY'S IMPRESSIONS

REF: A. SEOUL 2225 B. SEOUL 2139

1. WHILE EMBASSY DOES NOT INTEND TO PREDICT BASIC THRUST OF REPORT WHICH CODEL SAID WILL BE WRITTEN ON HIS SEOUL VISIT, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO PASS ALONG INITIAL VIEWS WHICH CODEL SHARED WITH EMBOFFS AND EMBASSY IMPRESSION OF VISIT.

2. IN FINAL SESSION WITH EMBASSY, CODEL SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET FULLY SORTED OUT HIS IMPRESSIONS AFTER SOME FOUR DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS. IT WAS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE DISTINCT VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS BEING PRACTICED BY THE ROKG. IN THIS REGARD, HE REPEATED HIS BASIC THESIS: THAT THE US CONGRESS AND PUBLIC WERE NOT IN A FOOD TO CONTINUE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO A REGIME WHICH VIOLATED HUMAN RIGHTS AND THAT SUCH PRACTICES WERE NOT ONLY IMMORAL BUT DAMAGED RATHER THAN ENHANCED SECURITY. CODEL OFFERED NO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSUADING THE ROKG TO MOVE TOWARD GREATER DEMOCRACY OTHER THAN THAT THE USG IN WASHINGTON MUST MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT WANTS THE ROKG TO GO IN THIS DIRECTION. HE TERMED WHAT IS KNOWN
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AS THE FRASER AMENDMENT AS A "CRUDE" AND NOT VERY

SATISFACTORY MEANS TOWARD THSI END. HE INSISTED
IN ANY CASE THAT IT BEHOVED ROKG TO MOVE TOWARD
DEMOCRACY IF IT WANTED A CONTINUED US COMMITMENT.

3. AS REPORTED IN SEPTELS, OPPOSITION FIGURES WHO MET
WITH FRASER WERE CRITICAL TO VARYING DEGREES OF WHAT
THEY SAW AS USG TENDENCY TO FAVOR SECURITY RATHER
THAN DEMOCRACY AND CONCOMITANT USG FAILURE TO RESTRAIN
UNDEMOCRATIC POLICIES OF PAK REGIME. THESE COMMENT
CAME AS SURPRISE NEITHER TO EMBASSY NOR TO FRASER.
OPPOSITION FIGURES GENERALLY MADE NO SPECIFIC
SUGGESTIONS ON WAYS FOR USG TO PERSUADE PAK
GOVERNMENT TO TAKE STEPS TOWARD DEMOCRACY. ONLY
EXCEPTION OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE IS PROPOSAL BY
KIM YONG-SAM (REF B) TO THREATEN TOTAL CUT-OFF
OF AID AND WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS. IT IS QUESTIONABLE, HOWEVER,
THAT SUGGESTION WAS EITHER CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT
BY KIM OR TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY FRASER. NO OTHER
OPPOSITION FIGURES, IN CONVERSATIONS AT WHICH
EMBOFFS PRESENT, SUGGESTED THAT REDUCTION OF AID
OR THREAT TO DO SO BE USED AS MEANS OF
PRESSURING PAK REGIME. ON OTHER HAND, CODEL STAFF
MEMBER BOETTCHER SAID IN FINAL SESSION THAT CODEL
WAS SURPRISED BY EXTENT TO WHICH OPPOSITION FIGURES HAD
INDICATED THAT AID REDUCTION (THOUGH NOT TROOP
WITHDRAWAL) BE USED AS A WEAPON TO PRESS PAK GOVERNMENT
TOWARD DEMOCRACY.

4. FRASER AND HIS AIDES SAID THEY WERE NOT FAVORABLY
IMPRESSED BY MOST OF THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT FIGURES
THEY HAD MET. ONE AIDE DESCRIBED FRASER AS BEING
"TURNED OFF" BY SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON. CONGRESSMAN
HIMSELF TERMED KIM CHONG-PIL "A HARD-LINER". MINISTER
OF JUSTICE MERELY CAUSED A GENERAL RAISING OF
EYEBROWS. CANNED BRIEFING AT MND WAS DISMISSED
AS "PENTAGON EAST." ONLY ROKG OFFICIAL WHO WAS SAID
TO HAVE PRESENTED GOOD DEFENSE OF POLICIES WAS VICE
FONMIN LHO.

5. MAIN SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEM IN DISCUSSIONS WITH
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GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WAS THAT THEY AND FRASER
BASICALLY TALKING AT CROSS PURPOSES. THEIR LINE
WAS THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED SOME
LIMITATIONS ON FREEDOMS. FRASER'S POSITION WAS EXACTLY
THE OPPOSITE--THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED
FULL EXERCISE OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS SINCE IT WAS
ONLY UNDER THESE CONDITIONS THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE
UNITED AND HAVE WILL TO OPPOSE COMMUNISM.

6. MUCH OF FOREGOING SEEMED FAIRLY PREDICTABLE AT
OUTSET OF VISIT AND WOULD NOT, ON THE FACE OF IT,
PRESAGE ANY MAJOR SHIFT IN CODEL'S THINKING. ONE
TROUBLING ASPECT OF VISIT, HOWEVER, WAS IMPLIED OR
EXPLICIT COMPLAINTS CODEL RECEIVED FROM SOME
QUARTERS THAT USG AND EMBASSY TOO CLOSE TO PAK REGIME.
SOME AMERICAN MISSIONARIES MADE THIS POINT DURING
MEETING WITH FRASER AT WHICH EMBOFFS PRESENT, WHILE
FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS TOLD FRASER THAT THEY "DID
NOT TRUST" EMBASSY. DURING CALL ON YUN PO-SON,
POL COUNS WAS MANEUVERED BY YUN INTO SEPARATE ROOM,
WHILE HE MET WITH CODEL IN ANOTHER PART OF HIS
HOUSE. CODEL STAFFER LATER TOLD POL COUNS THAT
YUN SAID HE "DID NOT TRUST" EMBASSY. IN FINAL
SESSION WITH EMBOFFS FRASER SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD
THESE COMMENTS, PARTICULARLY ON THE PART OF THE
AMERICANS, TO BE A RESULT OF THEIR DISSATISFACTION
WITH THE BASIC THRUST OF US POLICY RATHER THAN
REFLECTIONS ON TRUSTWORTHINESS OF US OFFICIALS.
POSSIBILITY IS GREAT, IN ANY CASE, THAT THESE ATTITUDES
MAY HAVE SERVED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TO GIVE
IMPRESSION THAT USG MUCH TOO FIRMLY IN
BED WITH PAK GOVERNMENT.
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